Helping Students get Advanced Training
Advanced training programs

• professional programs, e.g.,
  – medical school
  – veterinary school

• master’s programs

• doctoral programs
What grad school is not

• 4 more years of college
• quick access to a high paying job
• what you do after college
What is grad school is

• training in research, critical thinking
• long, hard work
• includes
  – courses
  – exams
  – research
  – thesis
Affording doctoral training

• tuition
• health benefits
• living expenses
  – travel
  – supplies
  – food and rent
  – other
Affording doctoral training

- tuition
- health benefits
- living expenses
  - travel
  - supplies
  - food and rent
  - other

- scholarship
- provided
- stipend
- $14,000 – 17,000
Selecting a training program:
Key variables

1. faculty
   – how many share student’s interests
   – quality of their research
   – ability as educators
Selecting a training program: Key variables

2. training program
   – requirements
   – quality of courses
   – time to PhD
   – record of recruitment and retention
Selecting a training program: Key variables

3. students
   – quality
   – quantity
   – diversity
   – outcome
Selecting a training program: Key variables

4. financial aid
   – amount
   – duration
Selecting a training program: Key variables

- faculty
- training program
- students
- financial aid
Learning about graduate programs

• program literature
  – hard copy
  – web pages
• talking to faculty mentors
• visiting
Applying to graduate school: Different than college

- number of applicants
- number of acceptances
- composition of admissions committee
- formality of application process
What will the admissions committee see?

• application
• samples of work
• transcript
• GRE scores
• letters of recommendation
• student (if possible)
What will the admissions committee see?

application

• must be neat
• required essay
  – show that student + program = good match
  – demonstrate good communication skills
  – student should write on own *but* get feedback
What will the admissions committee see?

samples of work

• research abstracts and papers
  – published
  – unpublished

• term papers
What will the admissions committee see?

transcript

• all courses and grades
What will the admissions committee see?

letters of recommendation

• select persons carefully
• help them demonstrate they know student
• help them remember to send it
Other ways students can strengthen application

• contact 1-2 specific faculty members
  – describe self
  – indicate interest in their work – and why
Other ways students can strengthen application

• apply for a national fellowship
  – National Science Foundation
  – National Institutes of Health
  – Howard Hughes
  – others
So many schools
so little time – and money

• apply to a number of schools
  – about half a dozen
  – vary degree of selectivity

• application fees: can ask for waiver
Student preparation to visit a training program

• learn about them
  – program
  – faculty
• specify who they want to see
• ask for itinerary, prepare
• practice answering questions
• make a list of their questions
Visiting a training program

• dress appropriately
  – be traditional, conservative
  – objective: to be taken seriously
• meet faculty and students
• look over school and area
• interview them
• say thank you
Interviewing

- shake hands
- smile – and mean it!
- be polite
- sit up straight
- look at the interviewer
- provide brief, direct answers
- say thank you
Interviewing

things for students to remember

- they will always be “on”
- they were selected to be there
- this is chance to provide and get info
What a student can do *now*

- take stock of strengths and weaknesses
- improve their record
  - courses
  - research
  - communication skills
  - social skills
What a student can do *now*

- establish set of mentors
  - to provide feedback
  - to give advice
  - to write letters of recommendation
Making a final decision

- collect additional information
- contact potential mentors
- visit a 2\textsuperscript{nd} time if necessary
- make up balance sheets